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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5189
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2933
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2798
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3433
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0999
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3549

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000608

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, OES
ASTANA FOR HUDSPETH
TASHKENT FOR MUKHAMADIEV

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [TX](#) [UN](#) [ZK](#) [AORC](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: UN CENTRE FOR PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY
PUTS POSITIVE SPIN ON ARAL SEA MEETINGS

Classified By: Charge Richard Miles, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY: A diplomat from the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy disputed press reports that the meetings of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea "broke down in bitter disagreement." He maintained that the frank discussions between the heads of state resulted in a more substantive declaration than has been written after previous Fund meetings. He also said that the agreement to meet again in the fall of 2009 was a major accomplishment. At one point, Kazakh President Nazarbayev told Kyrgyz President Bakiyev to stick to the agenda. Increased cooperation between the Fund and the Regional Centre is one of the points in the declaration produced and agreed-upon at the end of the meeting. It's quite possible that Reuters and other news agencies did not give a full picture and focused on the more negative aspects of the meeting were not aware of the final declaration and did not factor it into their reporting. However, the Centre may feel it should put a positive spin on the meeting. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Human Rights Officer at the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, Marc Bojanic, accompanied Ambassador Miroslav Jenca to meetings of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea held in Almaty on April 28. In a meeting on May 8, he explained why negative reports on the talks that appeared on major press agency websites were inaccurate. (NOTE: For example, Reuters reported that "A rare Central Asia summit on how to share scarce water resources broke down in bitter disagreement ... after the region's five leaders failed to find any common ground" END NOTE.) Bojanic said that it was true that the heads of state clashed on various topics during the morning session. However, at lunch behind closed doors, they were able to overcome some misunderstandings and by the end of the talks they adopted a final declaration. Bojanic said that this declaration is longer than previous declarations. He added that previous declarations were one and a half pages in length, making this three-page declaration the most concrete statement ever. The

heads of state made a commitment to meet again in fall 2009, which Bojanic sees as a major improvement since the last Fund meeting was held in 2002.

14. (SBU) Bojanic characterized the discussions as "healthy" and said that the "declaration itself is a success, and a small step towards regional cooperation." He added that "the declaration is not boring -- it's substantive" as a result of the fact that "real debate occurred." Points in the declaration include:

- Intensification of efforts and cooperation with UN Agencies, including the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia;

- Further improvement of the Fund's organizational structure and legal framework, including active interaction with financial institutions and donors on projects and programs; and

- Development of an Action Program for 2011-2015, with involvement of national experts and donors.

15. (SBU) Bojanic cited as an example of the frank nature of discussions Kazakh President Nazarbayev's admonishment of Kyrgyz President Bakiyev when Bakiyev attempted to steer the discussion towards Kyrgyzstan's need to construct hydropower stations. Nazarbayev insisted that Bakiyev stick to the agenda. Bojanic said that upstream countries, concerned with protecting their rights to continue construction projects

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brought up general water issues, while downstream countries -- which were more concerned with the ability to find agreements to help one another -- discussed the status of the Aral Sea.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: It is probably true that media reports did not provide a full and complete picture of what happened at the meetings. However, it is also quite possible that our interlocutor downplayed some of the more negative aspects of the meeting. The Centre has an interest in showing that the five parties can resolve these contentious issues harmoniously and that the Centre can play a role in facilitating it. END COMMENT.

MILES